



# MADRE

Fall 2014

[www.madre.org](http://www.madre.org)

## *Dear Friend,*

In war-torn communities across the world, there is another, hidden war raging—and the battlefield is women's bodies.

In Iraq, armed militants have kidnapped, raped and sold women in the towns they have seized. In Colombia, young girls recruited as child soldiers are turned into sex slaves. When asked why they fled their homes, Syrian women refugees said that fear of rape was the number one reason.

For ages, wartime rape has been dismissed as inevitable in the fog of war. But these attacks are not incidental. They are deliberate, devastating violations of women's human rights, and they are designed to terrorize communities. Rape is not an accident of war—it is a weapon of war.

When I speak to our partners on the frontlines of these crises, my blood runs cold hearing about the horrors women have endured. But I still have so many reasons to be hopeful.

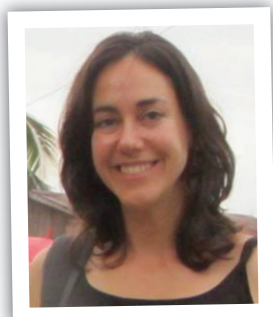
I am hopeful because of the unflagging bravery of our sisters worldwide, who rise above terror to protect each other. Our Iraqi partners have set up emergency shelters and hotlines to rescue women in danger. Our Colombian sisters have created a refuge for young girls recovering from their experiences as child soldiers, a place where they rediscover beauty through art and dance. And we're partnering with Syrian women activists, who are organizing for a seat at the table in peace negotiations, so that rape as a weapon of war cannot be ignored.

I am hopeful because of the real progress I have seen in recent years. Women worldwide are pushing powerful policymakers to listen to our demands. The United Nations has recognized wartime rape as a war crime, and just this June, government leaders called a global summit to rally action.

And most importantly, I am hopeful because of you. You have stood side-by-side with MADRE and our sisters worldwide. Your support made it possible for us to protect women from danger and to agitate for global action. Even when the headlines and history books have glossed over rape in war, your backing made it possible for us to meet the needs of women and work to end this atrocity.

With gratitude,

Yifat Susskind  
Executive Director



# Your support brings healing to survivors of wartime rape

**Care and Shelter for Women Fleeing ISIS** With your support, we responded immediately when extremist militants took over northern Iraq this summer. Our partners told us how these men targeted women with rape and sexual slavery. With our Iraqi sisters, we expanded our secret shelter services to reach women escaping this brutal violence, including opening *the only* women's shelter in ISIS-controlled territory. **Because of you, over 200 women threatened with deadly violence have found refuge and received the food and medical care that they need to heal from trauma.**

**Urgent Aid for Syrian Women** Many Syrian refugee women, now numbered at over 1.5 million, have cited rape as their primary reason for fleeing war-torn Syria. But as refugees, these women are still at risk of sexual violence. Thanks to you, we mobilized an emergency response to bring life-saving aid to women refugees, including medical care and trauma counseling services. And with your support, we delivered 150 wind-up flashlights to Syrian women in Jordan, a vital guard against night-time attacks. **Thanks to you, Syrian women and girls are ensuring their survival through war.**

**For more updates on the life-sustaining impact of your support, visit [www.madre.org/mysupport](http://www.madre.org/mysupport)**



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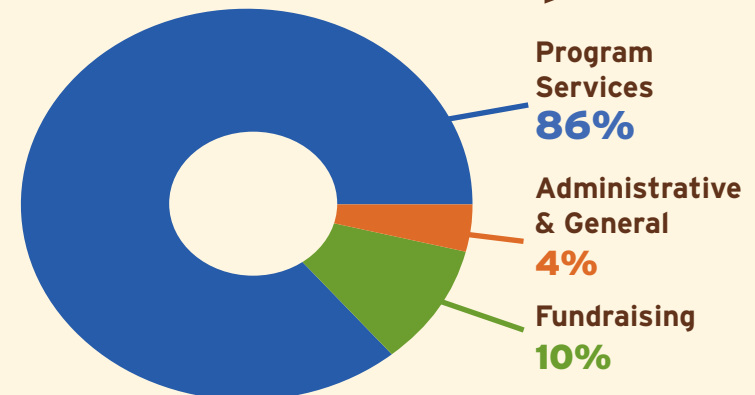
*Women facing the brutality of ISIS are determined to survive. Through MADRE, your support means shelter and safety for women in danger. Thank you.*

## How MADRE Makes Change

MADRE strengthens grassroots women's organizations in war, disaster and their aftermath. MADRE supports our partners to meet urgent community needs and trains and accompanies women to effect long-term change. MADRE galvanizes people around the world in support of our partners' demands by shaping public opinion and policy.

To learn more, visit [www.madre.org](http://www.madre.org)

## MADRE Expenses



# Combating and Preventing Rape in War

MADRE was *one of the first* organizations to push policymakers to recognize rape as a weapon of war. For decades, we've provided safe housing, healthcare and counseling to rape survivors. And we've advocated internationally for their rights. Here's a brief look at all you've helped—and will help—make possible through your support:



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## NICARAGUA

**"We believed that if women in the US truly understood the misery that their government was causing, they would demand change. And we were right."**

**-Dr. Mirna Cunningham, activist, doctor and longtime MADRE partner**

In 1983, Nicaragua was not in the headlines—even though US-backed armed groups were killing people almost daily and targeting women with rape. So a group of Nicaraguans filed an international lawsuit against the United

States. One of them was Dr. Mirna Cunningham, who reached out to US women for solidarity. Inspired by her role in this watershed court case—the first of its kind to bring rape as a weapon of war to the international stage—together they formed the sisterhood that became MADRE.



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## GUATEMALA

**"My only hope in life is to find justice for Rosemary. Sometimes I want to give up. But I have to keep going with Rosemary's case so she'll be proud of me."**

**-Rosemary's mother, Betty, whose daughter was raped and killed in a wave of violence targeting women in Guatemala.**

In Guatemala, peace accords were signed in 1996, but the war still rages on for women. Widespread murders of women, known as femicide, echo the sexual violence of the civil war. That's why MADRE has worked to promote health and security for women both during the country's 36-year civil war and beyond.

And now, with your backing, we're offering legal support to demand enforcement of laws that protect women and end violence. Just last year, Rosemary's killer was found guilty, the first guilty verdict that her community has ever seen. Thanks to you, women in Guatemala are gaining freedom from violence.

## COLOMBIA

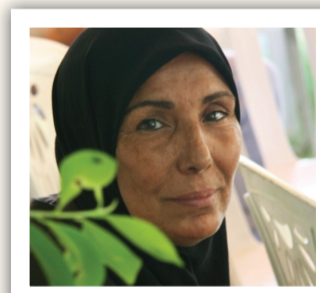
**"Nobody has the right to use my body. I was only 13 years old. I never should have experienced the abuse and the horror. Take my body out of the war."**

**-a young Colombian girl and former child soldier who was sexually abused.**

In Colombia, your support offers trauma counseling, skills-building and art therapy to former child soldiers, many of whom are survivors of sexual violence. Thanks to you, girls are healing from war and displacement, speaking out for justice and ending cycles of violence.

## IRAQ

MADRE provides emergency relocation, shelter and aid to women and girls fleeing extremist violence, including rape and sexual slavery. Thanks to you, Iraqi women are finding safety amidst crisis.



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## FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

In 1993, MADRE member support provided healthcare, counseling, shelter and legal support to rape survivors in the Balkans. And we organized a nationwide speaking tour to put a new focus on this global crisis of rape as a weapon of war.



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## RWANDA

**"The women we met are passionate and not bitter. They are focused on rebuilding their country and their lives. They want justice and reconciliation. And they are determined to develop the skills they need to be full participants in their country's future."**

**-Vivian Stromberg, MADRE Senior Adviser and former Executive Director, reflects on her 1996 trip to Rwanda**

In Rwanda, women were targeted with rape as a tool of genocide. MADRE members helped women recover and rebuild from their trauma with medical care and counseling. We also helped women bring their testimonies to the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda. This experience drives our work today in Syria. There, we are documenting cases of wartime rape to seek justice today and shape a peaceful tomorrow.



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## SYRIA

MADRE delivers aid, trauma counseling and reproductive healthcare to Syrian refugee women and girls who face wartime sexual violence. Because of your support, Syrian women and girls are receiving the care they need to rebuild their health through war.

**"I see the impact of your support in the resilience of our sisters and the strength of our work worldwide. Thank you for making all the difference."**

**-Yifat Susskind, MADRE Executive Director**



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